

Postal Regulatory Commission

Washington, D.C. 20268-0001

NOTICE OF FILING UNDER 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)

TO THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE:

Please take notice that the Commission received two petitions for review of the Postal Service's determination to close the Viola post office located in Viola, Idaho. The first petition for review received November 15, 2011, was filed by Dan Hardesty. The second petition for review received November 15, 2011, was filed by the Patrons of Viola. The earliest postmark date is November 7, 2011.

This notice is advisory only and is being furnished so that the Postal Service may begin assembling the administrative record in advance of any formal appeal proceedings held upon the alleged (closing/consolidation) for transmittal pursuant to 39 CFR § 3001.113(a) (requiring the filing of the record within 15 days of the filing with the Commission of a petition for review).



Shoshana M. Grove
Secretary

Date: December 1, 2011

Attachment

Dan Hardesty P.O. Box 80 Viola, ID 83872

Received

NOV 14 2011

A 2012-71
November 7, 2011
RECEIVED

U.S. Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Ave. Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

Office of PAGR

2011 NOV 15 P 2: 22

RE: Determination to Close the Viola, ID Post Office – Docket # 1386031-83872

POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Commission:

I am writing to appeal the decision by the Postal Service (PS) to close the Viola, ID Post Office (V.P.O). In addition, I will use the recent construction activity at the V.P.O. to suggest an alternative approach to reducing the PS red ink.

The following are points I trust you will take into account when considering my appeal.

1. The PS violated 39 USC 404 by not providing adequate notice of its intent to close the Viola P.O. **Even though the PS indicated it mailed 225 notices, more than 25% of the customers being served by the V.P.O. did not receive any notice of the PS's intent to close the V.P.O., including the owners of the building that the PS leases space from. Further, of the 82 questionnaires returned 69 respondents, an overwhelming majority, indicated closing the V.P.O will adversely impact them.**
2. Closing the V.P.O will have a devastating impact on the local community. **The PS responses to the concerns of the community were inadequate when addressing such things as disabilities, weather, individuals cost associated with traveling to another Post Office, if additional tasks are added to the rural carrier's current workload, that the carrier will not be able to provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services currently received from the V.P.O., and the fact that there are no commercial storefront businesses in Viola means a Community Post Office is not a viable alternative.**
3. Closing the V.P.O, will impact the employee currently working for the P.S. **The P.S. used the rational that the V.P.O. currently does not have a Postmaster so there will be minimum employee impact. Never the less, the one person currently working at the V.P.O. will lose her lively hood.**
4. Closing the V.P.O will go against other government programs in place to sustain rural communities. **USDA is promoting rural community development. Closing the V.P.O goes against Government's emphasis on supporting rural communities.**
5. Closing the V.P.O. will disrupt mail service for those who have a mail box within the Post Office. **One of the concerns raise was the disruption caused by a change in a persons' address. Response # 9 in the Docket indicated there would be "no change in the customers address". However item 3 of the disadvantages indicates there will be "a change in the mailing address and a carrier address will be assigned". That sounds like a disruption to me.**
6. The advantages of closing the V.P.O. are weak at best. **Customers choose to go to the Post Office they don't "need" to go. Customers already have 24/7 service with the existing Post Office so carrier service does improve on that. Closing the V.P.O. will provide minimal savings to the PS. The V.P.O currently provides "CBUs" inside the V.P.O. The PS is proposing to install CBUs, but doesn't say where, how many or at what cost for construction and maintenance.**

7. The disadvantages of closing the V.P.O are more adverse than indicated. **Relying on the rural carrier for retail outlet services is not practical for many customers. The rural carrier route schedule is not exact, so meeting the rural carrier at the rural box would be very time consuming and impractical in inclement weather. And yes it will be a huge disadvantage to change my mailing address. And the disadvantage of increasing my PO Box Fee for less service is not acceptable.**
8. And finally closing the V.P.O will provide the P.S. with a minimal cost savings. **The PS estimates there will be an annual cost savings of \$28,873, \$3,414 lease cost and the remainder is salary. If the V.P.O is closed, the customers will have to use the PO in Moscow, ID. That PO is notorious for long lines, poor customer service and limited parking. The additional work load at the Moscow PO will necessitate the hiring of an additional employee and thus there will be Zero savings in salary. Therefore closing the V.P.O will only save the P.S. \$3,418 annually.**

One must ask the question: Is an annual savings of \$3,418 a valid reason to close the Viola Post Office? Your answer must clearly be NO.

I indicated there may be alternatives to closing post offices that will reduce PS expenses. It appears that various branches of the PS don't communicate with each other. The PS began assessing the closure of the V.P.O. in June. In August a contractor from Helena, Montana, 352 miles away, showed up in Viola and began upgrading the disability access to the Post office. During several trips over the course of Aug, Sept and Oct the contractor installed a cement handicap ramp, hand rails, cement handicap parking slab, modified the counter for handicap accessibility, installed handicap doorknobs and modified the bathroom to make it handicap compliant. If you add up mileage, per diem, salaries, and construction material costs that is a significant expense to the PS. All of which will be wasted if the Viola Post Office is closed.



How many of the other 3,500 Post Offices slated for closure received upgrades? If the PS installs CBUs in Viola, will the contractor come from Helena? Instead of balancing the PS budget on the backs of the rural community customers, perhaps the PS should cut out the construction waste instead. At a minimum there are many out of work contractors only 10 miles away in Moscow that could have completed this work.

Please do whatever is in your jurisdiction to stop the Postal Service from closing the Viola Post Office!

Regards and thank you.



A2012-71

APPEAL LETTER TO POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION

November 3, 2011

RECEIVED

Ms. Ruth Y. Goldway, Chairman
Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

Received

2011 NOV 15 P 2:21

NOV 14 2011

POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

SUBJECT: Viola, Idaho Post Office Closure

Office of PAGR

Dear Chairman Goldway:

The Postal Service has posted the Final Determination to close the Viola, Idaho post office and extend the service by Rural Route service. The Moscow post office and Rural Carrier will provide our service. The Moscow office is nine miles from the Viola post office. Many of the rural folks live several miles from the Viola post office and would have to commute twenty miles or more to the Moscow post office.

The attached list, containing signatures of customers served by the Viola Idaho post office, do not feel that the alternate service offered by the Postal Service is acceptable as it does not provide a maximum degree of regular and effective service that customers are entitled to in accordance with federal law. Federal law prohibits the Postal Service from permanently closing a small post office just to save dollars. (Under Title 39, United States Code 404(b) any decision to close or consolidate a post office must be based on certain criteria not dollars).

We do not believe closing our post office and providing delivery and retail service by a rural carrier meets the requirements of the above-mentioned rule. It is very inconvenient for customers to purchase money orders/stamps and sending/receiving accountable mail such as registered and certified mail. We are also concerned about vandalism, theft of our mail, and identity theft.

The decision has been made to combine our post office with the Moscow, Idaho post office and we strongly oppose this action. The postmaster plays an important role in our community, especially for elderly and infirm. Many of our residents do not drive or even have a checking account and they will be hit hard by this decision because our postmaster assists them in meeting their obligations. Our postmaster helps them pay bills, write money orders and provides other postal duties.

Our post office represents the federal government to our residents and it is hard for us to understand the reasoning, especially when the final determination came in the middle of the construction of a handicapped project at the Viola post office, by the Postal Service. This project has an estimated cost of \$20,000 and it adds further confusion and concern that the decision is inappropriate. We understand that the Postal Service has financial issues but isn't it against the law to close a post office just to save money? How can the federal government spend billions of dollars in an attempt to create jobs and then a branch of the federal government eliminates vital jobs in small towns? Rural America is just as important as urban America. A post office in urban America may be a luxury and a convenience but in rural America a post office is a necessity and we are proud to see our flag flying over our post office every day.

Sincerely,

Patrons of the Viola, Idaho, Post Office
Zip 83872 (If questions call 208-883-3423)

Enc. Supporting documents

cc. U. S. Senators and Congressmen
Representing Idaho

APPEAL PETITION TO SAVE THE VIOLA, IDAHO POST OFFICE

WE IN THE VIOLA, IDAHO 83872 COMMUNITY, HEREBY APPEAL THE CLOSURE OF OUR 100 YEAR OLD PLUS POST OFFICE BY THE US POSTAL SERVICE.

We believe the numbers used in making the final determination (Docket Number 1386031-83872) for the closure are not accurate.

Numbers relied on, including, the wages paid out, the benefits paid out for the employee and the annual lease are not accurate, nor do they match the actual expenses. The annual savings are also inaccurate and do not take into account the cost of replacing the infrastructure that is now in place. This closure will inconvenience residents and encourage the rural patrons to move further into the use of computers and the services of UPS and Fed EX thus causing even less revenue

Along with this petition we will be sending attachments and exhibits to support our position.

Name	Address - Zip Code	Phone
<u>Khalila Wright</u>		
<u>Debbie Goetz</u>		
<u>Terry Weber</u>		
<u>Bruce Ann Huff</u>		
<u>CS Huff</u>		
<u>Bonnie L Hagstrom</u>		
<u>Theresa Moller</u>		
<u>James M. Suttcliffe</u>		
<u>Wanda L Suttcliffe</u>		
<u>James Suttcliffe</u>		
<u>Wanda Suttcliffe</u>		
<u>Raymond D. Casale</u>		
<u>Julie Lockard</u>		
<u>Rachel Pasternak</u>		
<u>Virginia Pontreth</u>		
<u>Wanda Suttcliffe</u>		
<u>James J. Felt</u>		

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Name	Address - Zip Code	Phone
<u>Debra C. Brown</u>		
<u>Walter Adams</u>		
<u>Henry Votaw</u>		
<u>W. B. L.</u>		
<u>Walter R. Allen</u>		
<u>Donna B. Allen</u>		
<u>Paula B. Allen</u>		
<u>Carolyn Harmon</u>		
<u>Bill Gray</u>		
<u>Kathleen Gray</u>		
<u>Susan Schorzman</u>		
<u>Les Schorzman</u>		
<u>RICHARD STRONG</u>		
<u>DEBORA SUTTON</u>		
<u>Darren K. Falls</u>		
<u>JOHN KIMBROUGH</u>		
<u>Sam Kimbrough</u>		

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Name	Address - Zip Code	Phone
Jan Sawyer		
Ellen Allen		
Carlene Allen		
William Tai		
GARY SHIREV		
Chris Fleener		
Glenn Newton		
Laila Colson		
Donald Hall		
Tom		
ROB KEATING		
Tanya Volk		
Louise Biersch		
Jim Bierce		
Don Hutches		
Deanna J. Vance		
Dave Vance		